

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 623
By McLeary

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Dr. James Alexander
Leech of Madison County.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. James Alexander "Alex" Leech; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Leech was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Alex Leech served with acumen and alacrity as a veterinarian, in which position he earned the respect of the Madison County community for the exemplary quality of his work; and

WHEREAS, serving as a Madison County Commissioner from 1974 to 1982, Dr. Leech was elected Madison County Mayor in 1982 and he dutifully served his community as its Mayor for sixteen years; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Leech attended Tiptonville High School and Jefferson Military Academy, and graduated from Auburn University in 1947; and

WHEREAS, Alex Leech courageously served in the United States Army with distinction during World War II as one of those proud Americans who earned the rightful designation as this country's "greatest generation"; and

WHEREAS, donating his time and talents to numerous noteworthy organizations, Dr. Leech served as the President of the Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association, a member of the Veterinary Board of Examiners, the Secretary and Treasurer of the West Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association, a member of the Tennessee State Aeronautics Board, the President of the Association of the Tennessee Valley Governments Board of Directors, Chairman of the Southwest Tennessee Development District Personnel and Grievance

Committees, Chairman of the West Tennessee River Basin Authority, Chairman of the United Way Emergency Management Funds Committee, Chairman of the Tennessee Association Human Resource Agencies, a member of the Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and Executive Committee, an honorary member of the Chamber Ambassadors, a member of Southwest Tennessee Health Planning, a member of the Easter Seal Society Board of Directors, a member of the Chickasaw-Shiloh Resource Conservation Development, a member of the Jackson Downtown Development Corporation, a member of the Job Training Partnership Association, a member of the West Tennessee County Executives/Mayors Association, a member of the Madison County Industrial Parks Committee, a member of the Madison County Democratic Party, and Chairman of the Madison County Board of Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, Alex Leech also served ex-officio on numerous boards, including those of West Tennessee Healthcare, the Jackson-Madison County Airport Authority, the Madison County Agricultural Committee, the Community Corrections Advisory Board, the Madison County Council on Aging, the Madison County E911 Board of Directors, the Jackson-Madison County Board of Education, the Madison County Election Commission, the Juvenile Court Services Board, the Jackson-Madison County Library Board, and the Municipal Solid Waste Advisory Board; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and accolades, Dr. Leech received the WDXI Radio Community Service Award, the 1983 Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association Career Award, the 1997 Tennessee Association of Human Resource Agency Presidents' Award, and was the first recipient of the George A. Smith Award in March 2002; he was also named the Tennessee Veterinarian of the Year in 1970; and

WHEREAS, a tremendous businessman and entrepreneur, Dr. Leech co-founded Jackson's first black radio station, WJAK, in 1954; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Leech loved to fly, earning his pilot license in 1952, and logged over 2,300 hours of flying time; and

WHEREAS, deeply devoted to his family, Dr. Leech always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order, and he was most thankful for the love and companionship he shared with his wife, Celia; and

WHEREAS, James Alexander Leech was preceded in death by his parents, Margaret Loggins McCain and William Zellner Leech; his brother, William E. Leech; his sister, Virginia Leech; and his lifelong friend, Mary Craig; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Leech is survived by his loving wife, Celia; two daughters, Maggie Byars and Melinda Blair; four step daughters, Bobbie Toombs, Rachel Willis, Sue Ellen Ryberg, and Laura Barnes; step son, David Blackwood; twenty grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; and life long friend, Billy Pirtle; and

WHEREAS, Alex Leech epitomized the spirit and commitment that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, Dr. James Alexander Leech leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Dr. James Alexander "Alex" Leech, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family and friends of Dr. Leech.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.